

For My Grandmother

They will not
come in again
with knives.
Your bones,
so near the skin
now, would rub
against them
like dead fish
rising to the surface,
white bellies on white hands.

They lean forward
and narrow their eyes.
You are a wind
pushing them back.
The light
from your body
drives the moths
into the night
in all directions.

What's left of you
is what I need:
a mind so sharp
I could put it
through the middle
of a man's chest
and leave
no crop of blood.

A Vanishing Animal

Curled into corners
in beds next to windows,
we sweat out the night.

We are the fish
of tight pockets,
the masters of closeness.
We have learned to sleep
like a fist knocking,
to take our breaths short
and close to the ribs,
and to dream
of ships sliding out.

We are the insects of the
curved spine.
Having mastered the quick
razor look into the night,
we wait only for the sun
to come,
tooth by yellow tooth,
eating its way
into our room.

-- Curt O. Hayden

Stockton, CA